COMPLETE LISTING OF CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) Fire escape apparatus suitable for use in locations where escape requires a movement from a first level to a second lower level comprising a casing, a flexible ladder, and a means for deploying said ladder; in which the casing has a mouth and is configured to contain the flexible ladder when not in use, the deployment means includes a spacer and ~~one or more handles~~at least one handle, and in which the deployment means ~~may be reversibly reconfigured~~is connected to said casing and is moveable between a storage configuration in which configuration the ladder is inside the casing and a deployed configuration in which the ladder is removed from the casing;

wherein the at least one handle is reversibly moveable between a stored configuration and a deployed configuration.

2. (previously presented) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 1 in which the casing is comprised of a base, first and second side walls, and front and back walls extending between the first and second side walls, and in which the mouth of the casing is an aperture between the inside and out side of the casing, and the mouth is located between the side walls and the front and back walls opposite the base.

3. (previously presented) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 2 in which one edge of each of the side and front and back walls are joined to the base.

4. (currently amended) The fire escape apparatus according to any preceding claim in which ~~each of said handles~~ the at least one handle has an associated handle channel located within the casing, each handle channel is dimensioned and configured to allow reversible movement of a handle along the handle channel when the deployment means is reconfigured, and in which a portion of ~~each~~ the at least one handle projects from an end of the associated handle channel when the deployment means is in the deployed configuration, and the projecting portion of ~~each~~ the at least one handle projects through the mouth of the casing.

5. (currently amended) The fire escape apparatus according to any of claims 1 to 3 in which ~~each~~ the at least one handle has an associated handle channel attached to an outside face of, or integral with, a wall of the casing, each handle channel is dimensioned and configured to allow reversible movement of the associated at least one handle along the handle channel when the deployment means is reconfigured, in which a portion of ~~each~~ the at least one handle projects from an end of the associated handle channel when the deployment means is in the deployed configuration, and the projecting portion of ~~each~~ the at least one handle is adjacent to the mouth of the casing.

6. (currently amended) The fire escape means according to claim 4 in which each channel is provided with stop means to limit the movement of the at least one handle in the channel between a stored position and a deployed position.

7. (currently amended) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 1 in which the spacer is adapted to move from a storage ~~position~~ configuration to a deployed ~~position~~configuration.

8. (previously presented) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 7 in which the spacer when in the storage position is at least partially within the casing.

9. (currently amended) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 7 in which the spacer is pivotally engaged with the at least one handle, and the spacer may pivot relative to the at least one handle when the deployment means is reconfigured.

10. (currently amended) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 9 in which the spacer comprises a first and second lateral bar deposed substantially parallel to each other, each lateral bar being pivotally engaged with ~~a~~ the at least one handle substantially at a first end and fixed to a spacer bar extending between the first and second lateral bars substantially at or adjacent to the second end.

11. (previously presented) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 10 in which each lateral bar includes a grip portion at or adjacent to the second end of said lateral bar.

12. (previously presented) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 9 in which the deployment means further includes a second ladder, said second ladder being shorter than the flexible ladder, and in which the second ladder is adapted to move from a storage position to a deployed position.

13. (previously presented) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 12 in which second ladder when in the storage position is at least partially within the casing.

14. (currently amended) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 12 in which the second ladder includes at least one ladder support means, at least two rungs, and at least one rung support means, and in which the ladder support means is pivotally engaged with the at least one handle, and the ladder support means pivots relative to the at least one handle when the deployment means is reconfigured.

15. (currently amended) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 14 in which the ladder support means comprises first and second support bars deposed substantially parallel to each other, each support bar being pivotally engaged with ~~a~~

the at least one handle substantially at a first end and engaged with a rung support means substantially at the second end.

16. (currently amended) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 14 in which the spacer and the ladder support means are each pivotally attached to a single pivot means on ~~each~~ the at least one handle to which they are attached.

17. (previously presented) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 14 in which the spacer and the ladder support means pivot in opposite directions when the deployment means is reconfigured.

18. (currently amended) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 16 in which the at least one of the pivot means is provided with one or more stop means, said stop means being adapted to limit the angle through which at least one of the spacer and the ladder support means may pivot.

19 (currently amended) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 17 in which the spacer and the ladder support means are each provided with ~~one or more~~at least one stop means, said stop means being adapted to limit the angle through which the spacer and the ladder support means may pivot relative to either the at least one handle or each other.

20. (previously presented) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 1 in which there are two handles wherein at least a portion of the mouth of the casing extends between the handles when in deployed position.

21. (currently amended) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 1 in which ~~each~~ the at least one handle has a substantially straight longitudinal axis, and a first end of the at least one handle is configured so that it is a suitable shape for easy gripping by a human hand.

22. (previously presented) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 1 in which the flexible ladder is comprised of a plurality of rungs, said rungs being fixed at substantially even spacings to a pair of longitudinal flexible rung supports.

23. (previously presented) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 1 in which one end of said flexible ladder is fixed to the base of the casing.

24. (previously presented) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 1 in which one end of said ladder is adapted to releasably engage with the spacer.

25. (previously presented) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 24 in which re-configuration of the deployment means from the storage configuration to the

deployed configuration causes the spacer to pull the end of the ladder releasably engaged with the spacer through the mouth of the casing.

26. (previously presented) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 1 in which there is further provided a removable closure means adapted to close the mouth of the casing.

27. (previously presented) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 26 in which the closure means is provided with at least one seal means adapted to produce a substantially liquid and or gas tight seal when the mouth of the casing is closed.

28. (currently amended) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 26 in which the closure means is further provided with ~~one or more~~at least one latch means adapted to latch the closure means in a closed position.

29. (previously presented) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 28 in which the deployment means further includes a power source adapted to cause the deployment means to be reconfigured from the storage configuration to the deployed configuration once activated by an actuation means.

30. (currently amended) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 29 in which removal of the closure means from the mouth of the casing causes the actuation of ~~the~~ an energy source.

31. (previously presented) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 29 in which the energy source is one or more compression springs, each of said springs being held in a compressed state by a second latch means, and in which the actuation means causes release of the second latch means.

32. (previously presented) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 1 in which the apparatus is adapted to be fixed to a building.

33. (previously presented) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 32 in which the apparatus is adapted to be fitted beneath a window of the building.

34. (previously presented) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 32 in which the wall of the casing includes one or more fluid tight passages, interconnected with each other, and an input port and an output port.

35. (currently amended) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 32 in which ~~the~~ a building has a structural frame, an inner skin and an outer skin, and in which

the apparatus is adapted to be fixed to the structural frame between the inner and outer skins, and the mouth of the casing faces upwards.

36. (previously presented) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 1 in which there is further provided a removable closure means adapted to close the mouth of the casing and in which the apparatus is adapted to be fixed to a building having a structural frame, an inner skin and an outer skin, and in which the apparatus is adapted to be fixed to the structural frame between the inner and outer skins, and the mouth of the casing faces upwards in which the closure means forms a window sill.

37. (previously presented) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 1 in which the apparatus is adapted to be used on a sailing vessel.

38. (previously presented) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 37 in which the apparatus is adapted to be fixed to the hull of the vessel adjacent the junction of the hull and a deck.

39. (previously presented) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 1 in which the apparatus is further provided with means to detect a change in the configuration of, or movement within, the apparatus, and communication means in which the communication means may communicate the detection of that change or movement to a monitoring device, or an indicator means.

40. (previously presented) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 39 in which the communication means send one or more communications via electromagnetic radiation or via fixed wires.

41. (previously presented) The fire escape apparatus according to claim 39 in which the communication means communicates detection of the change or movement to an emergency service or to apparatus which, in turn, causes a fire alarm to sound.